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DRL/MLGA FOR LYNN SICADE AND SYLVIA HAMMOND
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNHRC](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN ON BELARUS UNHRC CANDIDACY

REF: STATE 58054

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Fernando Fernandez-Arias, MFA Deputy DG for Human Rights, on May 3. Fernandez-Arias told Poloff that Spain cannot support Belarus and has made this known publicly in Geneva and New York. He said nobody in the EU would vote for Belarus. However, he said that Spain will not openly campaign for a third candidate, as the French and British are doing, for two reasons: it is not Spain's style; and it would not be appropriate given Spain's current OSCE chairmanship. He intimated that he had floated the idea to superiors who had rejected it as bad timing given Spain's chairmanship. In the absence of a third candidate, Fernandez-Arias was not sure whether Spain would vote a blank ballot or would write in another candidate. He expressed concern that Belarus would win even with a third candidate, due to its support in the Non-Aligned Movement. Fernandez-Arias said he did not believe Slovenia would withdraw its candidacy if a third country such as Bosnia were to enter the race.

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